

Country of the Week: Mauritius

The main island of Mauritius, which celebrated 49 years of independence on Sunday, is only 65 kilometers long and 45 kilometers wide. Its small size makes Mauritius the most densely populated country in all of Africa!

But don't let that density fool you. Its population of about 1.3 million people are lucky enough to enjoy the nation's beautiful sandy beaches, tropical climate, and the second-best air quality in the world (according to the World Health Organization's 2011 rankings). The country also ranks highly for democracy and political and economic freedom.

Not surprisingly, this week's #CountryoftheWeek is full of YALI Network members working hard to combat climate change, ensure everyone shares equal rights, and lift up aspiring entrepreneurs. Read more to learn how the Network has helped some of them achieve their goals!



Our first featured member this week is Audrey Athave, from Curepipe. According to Audrey, entrepreneurship and the rights of women and girls are the two issues that matter most in her community.

That's why she chose to apply for a training program at the [YALI Regional Leadership Center](#) located in Pretoria, South Africa. After participating in 2016, Audrey decided to use the skills she had learned to promote those two important issues. So, she says, "I created a nonprofit online platform showcasing women entrepreneurs of the Southern African region."

The aim of [AfrikHer](#), she explains, "is to shed light on the journey that brought these women to become entrepreneurs, and give value to their stories with a view to inspire and empower other aspiring women entrepreneurs."

"The platform is also aimed at sharing the latest news and tips on the products, services, and events from the entrepreneurs," she says.




Our next featured member, named Vagish Ramborun, lives in Pamplemousses. The most important issue facing Mauritius and the world, he says, is climate change. "All my work has as its aim to mainstream the importance of... sustainable agriculture" among youth, he says, and to drive home "its vulnerability to climate change."

To help raise awareness around the issue, Vagish first turned to the [YALI Network Online Courses](#). After earning a certificate in [Focus On: Understanding Climate Change](#) and attending a [U.S. Embassy](#) climate change event, Vagish shared his new knowledge through speaking roles at two major conferences. His work at the first, the Conference of Youth on Climate, earned him a "Green Champion" certificate; he helped organize the second "in collaboration with Mauritian climate leaders" from both the climate and agricultural fields.

Both conferences, Vagish says, "covered the impact of climate change on agriculture, and adaptation

strategies for carbon mitigation and building resilience” against a changing climate.

Now, Vagish is working to show individuals what they can do to help, promoting “rooftop farming and home gardening to decrease their carbon footprint.”

Our last featured member this week, Selena Roopnarain, comes from Quatre-Bornes. Her  passion is leadership. “Leadership is the capacity to mobilize and engage resources to translate vision into reality,” she says. “This is what I love doing.”

Selena joined the YALI Network last year to improve her leadership skills. However, “While looking for a local [#YALILearns](#) event to attend,” she says, “I realized there was no registered event in Mauritius, while other African countries were busy listing their events on the YALI Network online.”

Like a true leader, Selena stepped up. “I decided things must change, and took action.” She registered the first two Mauritian [#YALILearns](#) events of 2016 on the YALI Network [face2face Facebook group](#), gathering women leaders to pass on what she had learned in the [Workforce Collaboration and Development](#) course. She even held one in the local Creole language “to accommodate the learning needs of women at the grassroots level.”

“Many grassroots leaders do not necessarily call themselves leaders, yet they have as much drive and compassionate willingness to make things happen” as anyone else, Selena says.

In total, Selena has earned six [YALI Network Online Course](#) certificates and hosted seven [#YALILearns](#) events.

“Never give up on yourself and do not be afraid to ‘fail forward,’” she says. “It taught me valuable life lessons, and I courageously took a stand... to serve others better.”
